



Polluted Trailer Park on the Road to Brighter Future



During September 2002, cleanup work continued with excavation of industrial waste from the illegal landfill.

Forest Glen Mobile Home Subdivision

For residents of the Forest Glen Mobile Home Subdivision (Forest Glen site), it was an unhappy day to learn that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discovered they were living atop, and in some cases playing with, nuggets of hazardous waste. The site of the trailer park—which sits astride the boundary between the City of Niagara Falls and the Town of Niagara, NY—was apparently used as an informal landfill for chemical and other waste before part of the land was subdivided and developed. Through the close cooperation among federal, state, county, and local governments and responsible private entities, the site is now on the road to a brighter future.

Forest Glen Site

The 39-acre Forest Glen site includes an 11-acre former mobile home park that was built on land where chemical wastes had been illegally disposed. Approximately 150 people occupied the site upon discovery of the contamination. Prior to the 1960s, the site was a wooded swamp-land. Aerial photographs from the mid-1960s reveal that the area was cleared. During the early 1970s, low-lying areas of the site were filled with unknown materials. In 1980, the Niagara County Health Department detected contamination on the site. Apparently, the site owners had arranged for the disposal of hazardous substances at the site to fill in those low-lying areas. The trailer park was developed after a thin layer of topsoil was used to "cover" the hazardous waste.

Soils on site are contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and semi-volatile organic compounds. As a result, there was a risk to human health from accidentally ingesting or coming in contact with contaminated soils. Residents of the trailer park could have been exposed to high levels of contamination through normal work or play activities. Because the trailer park flooded during periods of spring snowmelt, contaminants could potentially move to drainage ditches that surround the site.

JUST THE FACTS:

- Responsible parties are paying more than \$25 million towards the cost of the cleanup and natural resource damages.
- Approximately 125 million gallons of groundwater will be treated and approximately 18,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment will be capped.
- Fifty-three families were permanently relocated to new homes.

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Forest Glen Resident

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Putting Citizens' Health First

With trailers on top of the waste and hazardous materials literally being introduced into the homes, prompt and effective action was urgent. One resident reported, "I was digging up holes for posts for the porch, when I saw this goo coming out. Then I told my wife to call the EPA," he said. "It was a brown molasses-like substance. It would not come off my shoe." After periodic reports of waste finds—such as taffy-like substances appearing in Forest Glen backyards—EPA became involved in the site in 1987. EPA officials strived to make the Forest Glen neighborhood a model for future relocation efforts at hazardous waste sites under the Superfund program. The agency temporarily relocated 27 families before the site was listed on the Superfund's National Priorities List and a high-visibility fence was placed around the contaminated area to alert residents. Between 1990 and 1992, 153 people were permanently relocated from the site. Because the Forest Glen trailer park is one of the few where residents actually own property, EPA provided residents with funds to purchase new homes at fair market value.

Government agencies also took steps to help children living in the chemically-contaminated area before they were relocated. First, a day care program was set up to give children a safe, supervised place to go in order to avoid playing in the polluted areas. Second, the state Health Department provided medical examinations (e.g., blood lead tests) for children in the community.

Responsible Parties Fix Past Wrongs - Cleaning up Forest Glen

While 14 parties were originally identified as responsible for dumping at Forest Glen, four are currently involved in cleaning up the Forest Glen site: Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, Niagara Falls USA Camp Site, Inc., and two individuals. In January 2001, EPA and Goodyear reached settlement whereby Goodyear agreed to cleanup the site according to EPA specifications, at an estimated cost of \$16 million. Goodyear will also pay more than \$9 million to EPA to reimburse the agency for cleanup costs and for damages to natural resources that resulted from contamination at the property. EPA also reached agreement with the other responsible parties to transfer the land to a trust for redevelopment and to pay \$81,000 to reimburse the Agency for past costs.

Under the cleanup plan, Goodyear is building a treatment plant at the site to remove hazardous chemicals from contaminated groundwater. Approximately 125 million gallons of groundwater will be treated. Goodyear will also construct an impermeable cap over the contaminated soil to prevent further migration of contaminants from soil into the groundwater, and to keep people from coming into contact with hazardous substances. Approximately 18,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil and sediment will be capped.

Cooperation Leads to Promising Development

As a result of the teamwork among EPA, the responsible parties, and state and local governments, a brighter economic future is in store for the area. The impermeable cap over the contaminated soil will provide the opportunity for redevelopment, supporting office, commercial, or light industrial use. Goodyear will design the cap to accommodate parking lots and warehouse-type buildings. The Town of Niagara and the City of Niagara Falls were integral in the zoning process that led to ultimate redevelopment. Area residents are in favor of this development plan as it has the potential to create jobs and tax revenue.

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<http://www.epa.gov/region2/Superfund>

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Cooperation is one of the defining characteristics of the Forest Glen site story. Responsible parties and the different levels of government collaborated to produce excellent results for the residents and the environment. In addition, federal officials working onsite developed very positive and constructive relationships with the residents. As one resident observed, "They [EPA officials] are fantastic," Grace Buffone said. "They're not just here working all business-like. They're down to earth. They feel what we feel. If it wasn't for them, we'd be in chaos."

The cleanup activities are proceeding on track. The soil cleanup design was completed July 11, 2002 and soil cleanup began August 5, 2002. The soil work should be completed by June 2003. As for addressing the contaminated groundwater, a Monitored Natural Attenuation Study will be completed by December 2002. The groundwater cleanup design is expected to be completed by December 2002 and the construction for the groundwater remedy is planned to be completed in 2003.



Fence and warning signs surround Forest Glen trailer park to prevent human contamination.